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Message Text

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17
ACTION EUR-12

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SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FEA-01 /106 W
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PASS ERDA SEVERING AND HIRSCH

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEC, ENRG, TECH
SUBJECT: EC RESEARCH COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 24

REF: 75 EC BRUSSELS 11271

1. SUMMARY: AT THEIR FEBRUARY 24 MEETING IN BRUSSELS, EC RESEARCH MINISTERS DECIDED TO FUND THREE RESEARCH PROGRAMS IN BIOLOGY AND HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND STANDARDS AND AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A PROGRAM IN THERMONUCLEAR FUSION. HOWEVER, THE COUNCIL WAS NOT ABLE TO AGREE ON SITING FOR THE JOINT EUROPEAN TORUS (JET), AND THE MATTER WILL BE EXAMINED AGAIN IN JUNE. END SUMMARY.

2. EC RESEARCH MINISTERS ON FEBRUARY 24 AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING THREE INDIRECT SCIENCE PROGRAMS:

3. A MULTIANNUAL COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR 1976 THROUGH 1980 IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGY HEALTH PROTECTION. A TOTAL OF 39 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE PROGRAM. ITS AIM IS TO SUPPLEMENT, EXTEND AND
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FURTHER SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW NECESSARY

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FOR ASSESSING PERMISSIBLE HUMAN RADIATION LEVELS. IT WILL CARRY OUT STUDIES ON THE EFFECTS OF RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION ON MAN, OTHER LIVING MATTER, AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THESE PROJECTS WILL FOR THE MOST PART BE CARRIED OUT BY MEANS OF COST SHARING CONTRACTS AND BY THE COMMISSION BIOLOGY GROUP AT ISPRA.

4. A MULTI- ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COVERING A 5 YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 1976. ITS PURPOSE IS TO ACQUIRE THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNITY. IT WILL ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF EXPOSURE TO POLLUTANTS AND POTENTIALLY TOXIC CHEMICALS, DEVELOP ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION RELATING TO CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION, DEVELOP WAYS TO PREVENT POLLUTION AND WAYS TO IMPROVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. THE PROGRAM WILL HAVE A BUDGET OF 16 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT.

5. A 5 YEAR PROGRAM BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 1976 TO STRENGTHEN, COORDINATE AND HARMONIZE NATIONAL EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF REFERENCE MATERIALS AND METHODS OF MEASUREMENT. WE ARE INFORMED THAT WHAT IS ENVISAGED IS A MINI NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL. 2.7 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT WAS ALLOCATED TO THIS PROJECT.

6. WITH RESPECT TO THE THERMONUCLEAR FUSION PROGRAM THE MINISTERS AGREED ON THE BASIC FEATURES OF A 5 YEAR PROGRAM BEGINNING IN 1976 ON CONTROLLED THERMONUCLEAR FUSION OF WHICH THE JET PROJECT IS THE MAJOR COMPONENT, AND PLASMA PHYSICS. A 5 YEAR BUDGET OF 124 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT WAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE AGREEMENT THAT 20.8 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT COULD BE USED IN 1976. THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, ON THE SITING OF THE JET. THE MINISTERS AGREED TO REEXAMINE THE QUESTION AT THE NEXT RESEARCH COUNCIL SCHEDULED FOR 18 JUNE.

7. WHETHER THE COMMUNITY CAN GO AHEAD WITH ORDERS FOR CRITICAL LONG LEAD ITEMS IS STILL UNRESOLVED. A COMMISSION SOURCE INDICATES THAT THIS QUESTION WILL
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BE EXAMINED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

8. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 25 EC COMMISSIONER RESPONSIBLE FOR SCIENCE BRUNNER SAID HE WAS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE COUNCIL ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, DISAPPOINTED THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN ON THE JET. HE SAID THAT FROM A FINANCIAL VIEWPOINT

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ISPRA HAS A SLIGHT ADVANTAGE SINCE ELECTRICITY IS CHEAPER AND THERE ARE 4,700 SQUARE METERS OF AVAILABLE BUILDING SPACE. LOCATING THE PROJECT AT ISPRA WOULD ALSO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF GUARANTEEING THAT IT WOULD BE TRULY A COMMUNITY PROJECT. IF IT WERE SITED AT ONE OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTERS IT WOULD INEVITABLY LOSE MUCH OF ITS COMMUNITY CHARACTER-- BRUNNER BELIEVES IT WOULD BECOME SOME 80 PERCENT A NATIONAL PROJECT AND ONLY 20 PERCENT COMMUNITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, A TECHNICAL DISADVANTAGE OT ISPRA IS THE ABSENCE THERE OF ANY PLASMA RESEARCH FACILITY. HE SAID A COMMITTEE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WOULD MEET IN BRUSSELS TO PREPARE A PAPER ON JET WHICH WOULD BR READY IN EARLY MAY.

9. BRUNNER NOTED THAT FROM A LEGAL STANDPOINT IT WAS THE COMMISSION'S VIEW THAT THE DECISION ON WHERE TO SITE THE JET COULD IN FACT BE TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE COUNCIL BUT THAT REALISTICALLY SPEAKING IF THE COMMISSION TOOK A DECISION OF SUCH POLITICAL IMPOR-TANCE ON ITS OWN IT COULD IMAGINE THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD REACT BY REFUSING TO APPROVE COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE. THE COMMISSION HAS NO INTEREST IN COMMITTING SUICIDE HE SAID.

10. BRUNNER SAID THAT IF A POSITIVE DECISION IS IN FACT MADE ON JUNE 18, THE SLIGHT DELAY INVOLVED WOULD NOT BE SERIOUS. A DELAY BEYOND THAT PERIOD, HOWEVER, WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS SINCE IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP THE JET RESEARCH TEAM TOGETHER ANY LONGER THAN THAT.HINTON

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